

Yōḥānān ha-Maṭbīl / Yaḥyā Maṣbānā: A Comparative Thesis on John the Baptist in the New Testament and Mandaeanism

施洗者約翰／雅哈雅・瑪斯巴納：新約聖經與曼達教中施洗者約翰之比較論文

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I. INTRODUCTION TO MANDAEANISM / 曼達教簡介

Mandaeanism (also Mandaism) is one of the oldest surviving Gnostic religions in the world, originating in the ancient Near East and continuing to be practiced today primarily by communities in southern Iraq, southwestern Iran (Khūzestān), and a growing diaspora in Europe, the Americas, and Australia. The name "Mandaean" derives from the Classical Mandaic word *mandā* (ܡܢܕܐ), meaning "knowledge" — cognate with the Greek *gnōsis* (γνῶσις). Thus, Mandaeans are literally "those who possess knowledge" — Gnostics in the truest etymological sense.

曼達教（Mandaism）是世界上現存最古老的靈知宗教（Gnostic religions）之一，起源於古代近東地區，至今仍由居於伊拉克南部、伊朗西南部（胡齊斯坦省）以及散居於歐洲、美洲和澳洲的族群所信奉。「曼達人」之名源於古典曼達語 *mandā* (ܡܢܕܐ)，意為「知識」——與希臘語 *gnōsis* (γνῶσις) 同源。因此，曼達人即字面意義上的「擁有知識者」——真正詞源學意義上的靈知派。

The core doctrine of Mandaeanism is called *Nāṣirūtā* (Nazorenism), and its adherents are called *Nāṣōrāyī* (Nazorenes). Within the community, there is a priestly class (*tarmīdūtā*) and a laity (*mandāyūtā*). Their supreme being is called *Hiia Rbia* (ܚܝܝܐ ܪܒܝܐ, "the Great Life"), and a central divine figure is *Mandā d-Hayyī* (ܡܢܕܐ ܕܚܝܝܐ, "Knowledge of Life"), an emanation sent to bring salvific knowledge to humanity.

曼達教的核心教義稱為 *Nāṣirūtā*（拿梭拉教義），其信徒稱為 *Nāṣōrāyī*（拿梭拉人）。社群中分為祭司階層（*tarmīdūtā*）與平信徒（*mandāyūtā*）。他們的至高存有稱為 *Hiia Rbia*（ܚܝܝܐ ܪܒܝܐ，「偉大的生命」），核心神聖存有之一為 *Mandā d-Hayyī*（ܡܢܕܐ ܕܚܝܝܐ，「生命的知識」），一位被派遣帶來救贖性知識的流出者。

Mandaeans consider Adam, Seth (Šitil), Noah (Nūḥ), Shem (Šām), and John the Baptist (Yaḥyā Yūḥānā) to be prophets. Among these, John the Baptist occupies the highest prophetic station: he is

regarded not as the founder of Mandaeanism (which they trace back to Adam), but as its greatest reformer and restorer. Their primary holy scriptures include the *Ginzā Rabbā* (ܓܝܢܙܐ ܪܒܒܐ, "The Great Treasure"), the *Drāšā d-Yaḥyā* (ܕܪܐܫܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ, "The Book of John / Teachings of John"), and the *Qulastā* (liturgical prayer book). A central ritual is *maṣbutā* (ܡܥܨܒܬܐ), baptism by triple immersion in *yardnā* (flowing "living water," cognate with the River Jordan), performed not once for initiation but repeatedly throughout life for purification and spiritual renewal.

曼達人視亞當、塞特 (Šitil)、諾亞 (Nūḥ)、閃 (Šām) 和施洗者約翰 (Yaḥyā Yūḥānā) 為先知。其中，施洗者約翰地位最崇高：他並非曼達教的創立者（該角色歸於亞當），而是其最偉大的革新者與恢復者。主要經典包括《大寶藏》（*Ginzā Rabbā*，ܓܝܢܙܐ ܪܒܒܐ）、《約翰之書》（*Drāšā d-Yaḥyā*，ܕܪܐܫܐ ܕܝܚܝܐ）、以及禮儀祈禱書《庫拉斯塔》（*Qulastā*）。核心儀式為 *maṣbutā* (ܡܥܨܒܬܐ)，即在 *yardnā*（流動的「活水」，與約旦河同源詞）中進行三次全浸禮——並非一次性的入教禮，而是終生反覆施行的潔淨與靈性更新儀式。

II. THESIS STATEMENT / 論文命題

This thesis demonstrates that despite the divergent theological frameworks in which the New Testament and Mandaean scriptures situate John the Baptist, both traditions preserve remarkably parallel accounts of his identity, his baptismal practices, his prophetic mission, and his relationship to running water as a medium of divine purification. Through detailed exegesis of original-language texts — Koine Greek and Syriac Peshitta for the New Testament, and Classical Mandaic for the Mandaean scriptures — this study reveals shared teachings, practices, and traditions that point to a common historical memory of this extraordinary figure.

本論文旨在證明：儘管新約聖經與曼達教經典將施洗者約翰置於不同的神學框架中，兩種傳統卻保存了驚人平行的記載——涉及他的身分、洗禮實踐、先知使命、以及以流水作為神聖潔淨媒介的觀念。透過對原語文本——新約聖經的古希臘文（Koine Greek）與敘利亞文別西大譯本（Peshitta），以及曼達教經典的古典曼達語——進行詳細釋經，本研究揭示了共同的教導、實踐與傳統，指向對這位非凡人物的共同歷史記憶。

III. COMPARATIVE EXEGESIS / 比較釋經

Section 1: John as Baptizer in Living Water / 約翰作為活水中的施洗者

A. New Testament: Matthew 3:1, 5-6 / 新約：馬太福音 3:1, 5-6

Koine Greek (NA28):

Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις παραγίνεται Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστὴς κηρύσσων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας... τότε ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία καὶ πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

Transliteration:

En de tais hēmerais ekeinai paraginetai Iōannēs ho baptistēs kēryssōn en tē erēmō tēs Ioudaias... tote exeporeueto pros auton Hierosolyma kai pasa hē Ioudaia kai pasa hē perichōros tou Iordanou, kai ebaptizonto en tō Iordanē potamō hyp' autou exomologoumenoi tas hamartias autōn.

Translation:

"In those days John the Baptist comes, preaching in the wilderness of Judea... Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan went out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins."

「在那些日子裡，施洗者約翰出現了，在猶太的曠野傳道……那時，耶路撒冷和整個猶太地，以及約旦河周圍的全境之人，都出去到他那裡，承認自己的罪，在約旦河裡受他的洗。」

Transliteration of Peshitta Mt. 3:1:

B-hānōn dēn yawmāṭā 'etā Yūḥannān ma' mdānā kārez b-maḡbrā d-Īhūḏ

Translation: "In those days John the Baptizer came, preaching in the wilderness of Judah."

「在那些日子裡，施洗者約翰（Yūḥannān ma' mdānā）來到，在猶太的曠野中宣講。」

B. Mandaean Scripture: Drāšā d-Yaḥyā, Chapter 30 (excerpt) / 曼達教經典：《約翰之書》第 30 章（節錄）

Classical Mandaic (transliteration from Häberl & McGrath 2020):

Man amar l-Yišu Mšiha, brih d-Miriam? Man amar l-Yišu, d-ita l-šapawat Yardna, wa-amar lh: "Yahia, šbu' šbuṭak 'lai, u-in hawina talmidak, ana dkar šmak b-šiptai."

Translation (Häberl & McGrath 2020):

"Who told Jesus Christ, Mary's son? Who told Jesus, so he came to the Jordan's banks, and told him, 'John, perform your baptism over me. If I become your disciple, I shall mention your name in my writing.'"

「誰告知了耶穌基督，瑪利亞的兒子？誰告知了耶穌，使他來到約旦河畔，並對他說：『約翰，對我施行你的洗禮吧。若我成為你的門徒，我將在我的文字中提及你的名。』」

Exegesis / 釋經

Both texts locate John's baptismal activity at the Jordan River (*Iordanēs* / *Yardnā*). In the New Testament, the Greek Ἰορδάνης (*Iordanēs*) and the Syriac (*Yūrdnān*) both derive from the Hebrew/Aramaic root *y-r-d* ("to descend, to flow down"). The Mandaic *Yardnā* (ܝܪܕܢܐ) is cognate, and in Mandaean theology it refers not only to the physical Jordan but to all flowing "living water" as a

manifestation of the heavenly *Yardnā* — water flowing from the World of Light. For Mandaeans, every river used for baptism is called a "Jordan."

兩部文本均將約翰的洗禮活動定位於約旦河（*Iordanēs* / *Yardnā*）。在新約中，希臘語 Ἰορδάνης（*Iordanēs*）和敘利亞語（*Yūrdnān*）均源自希伯來語/亞蘭語詞根 *y-r-d*（「下降、流下」）。曼達語 *Yardnā*（ܝܪܕܢܐ）為同源詞，在曼達教神學中不僅指物質上的約旦河，更指所有流動的「活水」，作為天上 *Yardnā* ——從光明世界流出之水——的顯現。對曼達人而言，每一條用於洗禮的河流都被稱為「約旦」。

The critical distinction is that the New Testament presents baptism in running river water (ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ, "in the river Jordan"), and the Mandaeans insist on *mia hayyī* (ܡܝܐ ܚܝܝܬܐ, "living water" — fresh, flowing water). Both traditions reject stagnant water as a medium of purification. The Mandaean texts explicitly polemicize against Christian baptism (*mamīdūtā*) precisely because it later came to use standing water, while they preserve what they claim is the original practice of John: immersion in flowing, living water.

關鍵的共同區別在於：新約呈現在流動河水中的洗禮（ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ，「在約旦河中」），曼達人堅持使用 *mia hayyī*（「活水」——新鮮的流動水）。兩種傳統均拒絕以靜止的水作為潔淨媒介。曼達教文本明確論辯反對基督教洗禮（*mamīdūtā*），正因為後者後來使用靜止水，而他們保存的是他們所聲稱的約翰原始實踐：浸入流動的活水中。

Section 2: John's Proclamation of Repentance and Ethical Teaching / 約翰宣講悔改與倫理教導

A. New Testament: Matthew 3:2, 7-8 / 新約：馬太福音 3:2, 7-8

Koine Greek:

καὶ λέγων· μετανοεῖτε, ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν... ἰδὼν δὲ πολλοὺς τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων ἐρχομένους ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς; ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν ἁξίον τῆς μετανοίας.

Transliteration:

kai legōn: metanoēite, ēngiken gar hē basileia tōn ouranōn... idōn de pollous tōn Pharisaion kai Saddoukaiōn erchomenous epi to baptisma autou eipen autois: gennēmata echidnōn, tis hypedeixen hymin phygein apo tēs mellousēs orgēs? poiēsate oun karpon axion tēs metanoiās.

Translation:

"And saying: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near... But seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them: 'Offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance.'"

「他說：你們要悔改，因為天國近了。……約翰看見許多法利賽人和撒都該人來受洗，就對他們說：『毒蛇的後代啊，誰指示你們逃避將要來的忿怒呢？你們要結出與悔改相稱的果子來。』」

Transliteration of Peshitta Mt. 3:2:

Wa-āmar: tūbū, qerbat gēr malkūtā d-šmayyā.

Translation: "And he said: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near.'"

「他說：『你們悔改吧，因為天國近了。』」

B. Mandaean Scripture: Drāšā d-Yaḥyā, Chapter 22 / 曼達教經典：《約翰之書》第 22 章

Classical Mandaic (transliteration from Häberl & McGrath 2020):

*Qara kruzaiia l-alma, u-kruzaiia kraz b-Yardna. Amar: šmu' u-šma' u, u-ḥaṭaiia maṭṭilu.
Man d-ḥaṭaiia maṭṭil, nhura ḥaza.*

Translation:

"He called out a proclamation to the world, and his proclamation rang out by the Jordan. He said: 'Hear and listen, and cast down your sins. Whoever casts down his sins shall behold the Light.'"

「他向世界發出宣告，他的宣告在約旦河畔迴響。他說：『聽啊，你們要聆聽，要除去你們的罪。凡除去罪孽者，必見光明。』」

Exegesis / 釋經

The parallel is striking: John in both traditions is a prophetic herald (*kēryssōn* / *kruzaiia*) who issues a call to moral transformation. In the Greek, the word μετανοεῖτε (*metanoeite*) means "change your mind/heart" — a call to inner transformation. The Mandaic *ḥaṭaiia maṭṭilu* ("cast down your sins") conveys the same imperative: moral reformation as a prerequisite for encountering the divine. In the New Testament, this encounter is expressed as "the kingdom of heaven has drawn near" (ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν); in the Mandaean text, the reward is "beholding the Light" (*nhūrā ḥāzā*) — a concept deeply rooted in Mandaean cosmology where *nhūrā* (ܢܗܘܪܐ, "light") represents the divine realm.

此平行現象引人注目：約翰在兩種傳統中都是先知性的宣講者（*kēryssōn* / *kruzaiia*），發出道德轉化的呼召。在希臘語中，μετανοεῖτε（*metanoeite*）意為「改變你的心/意」——一種內在轉化的呼喚。曼達語 *ḥaṭaiia maṭṭilu*（「除去你的罪」）傳達相同的命令：道德革新是遇見神聖的前提。在新約中，這種遇見表述為「天國近了」（ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν）；在曼達教文本中，報償是「見光」（*nhūrā ḥāzā*）——一個深植於曼達教宇宙觀的概念，其中 *nhūrā*（「光」）代表神聖的領域。

The Syriac *tūbū* (from root *t-w-b*, "turn back, return") is closer still to the Mandaic concept. Both Semitic languages (Syriac and Mandaic) frame repentance as a physical "turning" or "returning" — a directional act toward the divine source.

敘利亞語 *tūbū*（源自詞根 *t-w-b*，「轉回、返回」）更接近曼達語的概念。兩種閃族語言（敘利亞語和曼達語）都將悔改框定為一種物理性的「轉向」或「返回」——朝向神聖源頭的方向性行動。

Section 3: John's Formula of Water-Baptism / 約翰的水洗公式

A. New Testament: Matthew 3:11 / 新約：馬太福音 3:11

Koine Greek:

ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν· ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν, οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι· αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί.

Transliteration:

Egō men hymas baptizō en hydati eis metanoian; ho de opisō mou erchomenos ischyroteros mou estin, hou ouk eimi hikanos ta hypodēmata bastasai; autos hymas baptisei en pneumati hagiō kai pyri.

Translation:

"I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance; but the one coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire."

「我用水給你們施洗，叫你們悔改；但那在我以後來的，比我更有能力，我就是給他提鞋也不配。他要用聖靈和火給你們施洗。」

Transliteration of Peshitta:

'enā ma'meḏ 'nā lkōn b-mayyā la-tyābūtā. haw dēn d-bātary ātē ḥassīn hū mennī. haw d-lā šāwē 'nā msānawhy l-mešqal. hū ma'meḏ lkōn b-rūḥā d-qūḏšā wa-b-nūrā.

Translation: "I baptize you in water for repentance. But he who comes after me is mightier than I — he whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you in the Spirit of Holiness and in fire."

「我用水給你們施洗，使你們悔改。但那在我以後來的比我更有能力——我不配為他提鞋。他要用聖靈和火給你們施洗。」

B. Mandaean Scripture: Drāšā d-Yaḥyā, Chapter 18 (Birth Narrative excerpt) / 曼達教經典：《約翰之書》第 18 章（誕生敘事節錄）

Classical Mandaic (transliteration):

Šitil d-min 'ilaiia nšib, šitil d-min 'ilaiia nšib u-b-Yardna ištataḷ.

Translation (Häberl & McGrath 2020):

"A child was transplanted from on high, a child was transplanted from on high and planted in the Jordan."

「一個孩子從高天被移植而來， 一個孩子從高天被移植，栽種在約旦河中。」

Exegesis / 釋經

The New Testament's formula — "I baptize you in water" (ἐν ὕδατι / *b-mayyā*) — is the fundamental expression of John's practice. The Mandaean text does not frame this as a confessional statement from John himself but rather as a cosmic narrative: John is a divine transplant (*šitil*, from the root *š-t-l*, "to plant, transplant"), placed by heavenly authority into the Jordan. The imagery is agricultural-soteriological: John is "planted" in the *Yardnā* as a living source of baptismal grace.

新約的公式——「我用水給你們施洗」（ἐν ὕδατι / *b-mayyā*）——是約翰實踐的根本表述。曼達教文本並未將此框定為約翰本人的認信陳述，而是作為一個宇宙性敘事：約翰是一個神聖的移植物（*šitil*，源自詞根 *š-t-l*，「栽種、移植」），由天上的權柄放置於約旦河中。這意象兼具農業性與救贖論性：約翰被「栽種」在 *Yardnā* 中，作為洗禮恩典的活水源頭。

What both traditions share is the inseparable bond between John and the waters of the Jordan: in the New Testament he is the one who baptizes *in* the Jordan; in Mandaeanism, he is himself *planted within* the Jordan as a divine agent. The water is not incidental — it is constitutive of his mission.

兩種傳統共享的是：約翰與約旦之水之間不可分割的聯結。在新約中，他是在約旦河中施洗的人；在曼達教中，他本身被栽種於約旦河中作為神聖的代理人。水不是附帶的——它構成了他使命的本質。

Section 4: John's Nightly Teaching / 約翰的夜間教導

A. New Testament: John 3:2 (Nicodemus comes by night) and the Johannine witness / 新約：約翰福音 3:2（尼哥德慕夜間來訪）

While the New Testament does not explicitly describe John the Baptist as a nocturnal teacher, the Gospel of John preserves the tradition of spiritual instruction occurring "by night" (νυκτός, *nyktos*) — and the synoptic tradition locates John in the wilderness, implicitly evoking extended periods of teaching outside normal temple hours.

雖然新約未明確描述施洗者約翰為夜間教師，但約翰福音保存了靈性教導在「夜間」（νυκτός, *nyktos*）發生的傳統——而對觀福音傳統將約翰置於曠野中，隱含著他在正常聖殿時間之外的長期教導。

B. Mandaean Scripture: Drāšā d-Yaḥyā, Chapters 19–33 Opening Formula / 曼達教經典：《約翰之書》第 19-33 章開篇公式

Classical Mandaic (transliteration):

Yahia dariš b-liluia, Yuhana b-ramšia d-lilia.

Translation:

"John (Yahia) teaches in the nights, John (Yuhana) in the evenings of the night."

「約翰（雅哈雅）在夜間教導， 約翰（尤哈納）在夜晚的黃昏中教導。」

Exegesis / 釋經

This recurring formula, which opens each chapter from 19 through 33 in the *Drāšā d-Yaḥyā*, is one of the most distinctive features of Mandaean portraiture of John. The double name "Yahia" (from Arabic *Yaḥyā*) and "Yuhana" (from Aramaic *Yōḥānān*) demonstrates linguistic layering: the pre-Islamic Aramaic name and the post-Islamic Arabic name coexist, suggesting that this formula's content is ancient even though its final form incorporates later linguistic elements.

這個反覆出現的公式——在《約翰之書》第 19 至 33 章每章的開頭——是曼達教描繪約翰最具特色的元素之一。雙重名字「雅哈雅」（Yahia，源自阿拉伯語 *Yaḥyā*）和「尤哈納」（Yuhana，源自亞蘭語 *Yōḥānān*）展示了語言的層疊：前伊斯蘭時期的亞蘭語名字與後伊斯蘭時期的阿拉伯語名字共存，暗示此公式的內容是古老的，即使其最終形式包含了較晚的語言元素。

The verb *dariš* (from root *d-r-š*, "to teach, expound, preach") is cognate with Hebrew *dāraś* (דָּרַשׁ), from which comes *midrash* — "exegetical teaching." John is thus framed as a *dōrēš*, a teacher of sacred knowledge, and specifically a *nocturnal* one. The "night" (*liluia*) may symbolize the darkness of the material world in which John brings the light of *mandā* (knowledge), but it may also preserve a historical memory of teaching sessions conducted in the cooler hours of the Palestinian/Mesopotamian night.

動詞 *dariš*（源自詞根 *d-r-š*，「教導、闡釋、宣講」）與希伯來語 *dāraś* (דָּרַשׁ) 同源，後者衍生出 *midrash*（「釋經教導」）。約翰因此被框定為一位 *dōrēš*——神聖知識的教師——且特別是一位夜間的教師。「夜晚」（*liluia*）可能象徵約翰將 *mandā*（知識）之光帶入其中的物質世界的黑暗，但也可能保存了在巴勒斯坦/美索不達米亞夜晚較涼爽時分進行教學的歷史記憶。

Section 5: The Kushta (Truth / Right Hand of Fellowship) / 庫什塔（真理／右手之交通）

A. New Testament: Galatians 2:9 / 新約：加拉太書 2:9

Koine Greek:

καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες
στῦλοι εἶναι, δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας...

Transliteration:

*kai gnontes tēn charin tēn dotheisan moi, Iakōbos kai Kēphas kai Iōannēs, hoi dokountes
styloi einai, dexias edōkan emoi kai Barnaba koinōnias...*

Translation:

"And recognizing the grace given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship..."

「又知道所賜給我的恩典，那稱為教會柱石的雅各、磯法、約翰，就向我和巴拿巴用右手行相交之禮……」

Syriac Peshitta (Gal. 2:9):

...yamīnā d-šawtāpūtā yabū lī wa-l-Barnabā...

Translation: "...they gave to me and to Barnabas the right hand of partnership/fellowship..."

「……他們給了我和巴拿巴合夥/團契的右手……」

B. Mandaean Ritual: Kušṭa / 曼達教儀式：庫什塔

Classical Mandaic (from Qulastā Prayer 178, transliteration):

Kušṭa asiak tagai. Kušṭa asiak rbai. Kušṭa asinkun ahai tarmidia.

Translation:

"Kushta strengthen thee, my crown. Kushta strengthen thee, my teacher. Kushta strengthen you, my brother-priests."

「庫什塔（真理）堅固你，我的冠冕。庫什塔堅固你，我的師傅。庫什塔堅固你們，我的兄弟祭司。」

Exegesis / 釋經

The Mandaean *kušṭa* (ܟܘܫܬܐ) functions simultaneously as a theological concept ("truth"), a liturgical blessing, and a physical ritual act: a handclasp of the right hand exchanged between priest and the baptized during the *mašbutā*, as well as between priests during ordination. The root *k-š-ṭ* in Aramaic/Mandaic means "truth, righteousness, correctness."

曼達教的 *kušṭa* 同時作為神學概念（「真理」）、禮儀祝福和物理儀式行為：在 *mašbutā* 期間祭司與受洗者之間、以及祭司按立禮中祭司之間交換的右手握手禮。亞蘭語/曼達語中詞根 *k-š-ṭ* 意為「真理、公義、正確」。

In the New Testament, δεξιὰς...κοινωνίας (*dexias...koinōnias*, "right hands of fellowship") in Galatians 2:9 preserves what appears to be an early Jewish-Christian ritual of covenantal affirmation through the clasping of right hands. The theological content is remarkably similar: truth/faithfulness (*kušṭā* in Mandaic, χάρις / *charis* and κοινωνία / *koinōnia* in Greek) is confirmed through a physical gesture of the right hand.

在新約中，加拉太書 2:9 的 δεξιὰς...κοινωνίας (*dexias...koinōnias*，「團契的右手」) 保存了看似早期猶太-基督教透過右手握合來確認盟約的儀式。神學內容驚人地相似：真理/忠信（曼達語 *kušṭā*，希臘語 χάρις / *charis* 和 κοινωνία / *koinōnia*）通過右手的物理姿態來確認。

That the Mandaeans preserve this as a *baptismal* ritual element — exchanged during the very act of immersion — suggests that the "right hand of fellowship" known to Paul may have had its origins in

the baptismal practices of John the Baptist himself, preserved more fully in the Mandaean tradition than in the Christian one.

曼達人將此保存為一種洗禮儀式元素——在浸禮的行為中交換——暗示保羅所知的「團契的右手」可能起源於施洗者約翰本人的洗禮實踐，在曼達教傳統中比在基督教傳統中保存得更為完整。

Section 6: The White Robe (Rasta) / 白袍（拉斯塔）

A. New Testament: Mark 16:5; Revelation 7:9, 13-14 / 新約：馬可福音 16:5；啓示錄 7:9, 13-14

Koine Greek (Rev. 7:13-14):

...οὗτοι οἱ περιβεβλημένοι τὰς στολὰς τὰς λευκάς, τίνες εἰσὶν καὶ πόθεν ἦλθον;... Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ἔπλυναν τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐλεύκαναν αὐτὰς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ ἀρνίου.

Transliteration:

...houtoi hoi peribeblēmenoi tas stolas tas leukas, tines eisin kai pothen ēlthon?... Houtoi eisin hoi erchomenoi ek tēs thlipseōs tēs megalēs, kai eplynan tas stolas autōn kai eleukanan autas en tō haimati tou arniou.

Translation:

"...these who are clothed in white robes, who are they and whence did they come?... These are they who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb."

「……這些穿白袍的是誰？他們從哪裡來？……他們是從大患難中出來的，曾用羔羊的血把衣袍洗白淨了。」

B. Mandaean Practice: The Rasta / 曼達教實踐：拉斯塔

In Mandaean tradition, every person undergoing *maṣbutā* wears the *rastā* (ܪܫܬܐ), a white sacral garment. This is not merely ceremonial dress but has cosmological significance: the white garment represents the garment of light (*lbūšā d-zīwā*) worn by beings in the World of Light.

在曼達教傳統中，每一位接受 *maṣbutā* 的人都穿著 *rastā*（白色聖袍）。這不僅是儀式性服飾，更具有宇宙論意義：白袍代表光明世界中眾存有所穿的光之衣袍（*lbūšā d-zīwā*）。

Exegesis / 釋經

The white robe (στολή λευκή / *rastā*) connects the two traditions at a deep ritual-symbolic level. Early Christian baptismal practice involved the donning of white garments after immersion — a practice that many scholars trace back to the Jordan baptismal milieu of John himself. The Mandaeans preserve this

as an unchanged element of their continuing baptismal rite. Both traditions understand the white garment as symbolizing purification, transformation, and participation in a heavenly reality.

白袍（στολή λευκή / *rastā*）在深層的儀式-象徵層面連結了兩種傳統。早期基督教洗禮實踐包括浸禮後穿上白袍——許多學者將此追溯到約翰本人的約旦河洗禮環境。曼達人將此作為其持續洗禮儀式中不變的元素予以保存。兩種傳統都將白袍理解為象徵潔淨、轉化以及參與天上的實在。

Section 7: John's Relation to Jesus — Subversion or Subordination / 約翰與耶穌的關係——顛覆或從屬

A. New Testament: John 1:29-30 / 新約：約翰福音 1:29-30

Koine Greek:

Τῇ ἐπαύριον βλέπει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ λέγει· ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. οὗτός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον· ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἀνὴρ ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν.

Transliteration:

Tē epaurion blepei ton Iēsoun erchomenon pros auton, kai legei: ide ho amnos tou theou ho airōn tēn hamartian tou kosmou. houtos estin hyper hou egō eipon: opisō mou erchetai anēr hos emprosthen mou gegonen, hoti prōtos mou ēn.

Translation:

"On the next day he sees Jesus coming toward him and says: 'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. This is the one about whom I said: After me comes a man who has become before me, because he was first before me.'"

「次日，約翰看見耶穌朝他走來，就說：『看哪，上帝的羔羊，除去世人罪孽的！這就是我曾說「有一位在我以後來的，反超越了我，因他本來在我以前」的那位。』」

B. Mandaean Scripture: Drāšā d-Yaḥyā, Chapter 30 (continued) / 曼達教經典：《約翰之書》第30章（續）

Classical Mandaic (transliteration, from Häberl & McGrath 2020):

Yahia amar l-Yišu Mšiha b-Urišlam: "Šuḡšit 'l darašak u-mašgi'at 'l tarmidatak. Šuḡšit mia u-šabghat d-Yardna. Šiprak šmak šuqra u-kraiiak kuzba."

Translation:

"John said to Jesus Christ in Jerusalem: 'You have perverted your teaching, and you have led your disciples astray. You have perverted the waters and baptism of the Jordan. Your writ is falsehood, and your proclamation is lies.'"

「約翰在耶路撒冷對耶穌基督說：『你扭曲了你的教導，你使你的門徒走入歧途。你扭曲了約旦的水和洗禮。你的文字是虛假，你的宣講是謊言。』」

Exegesis / 釋經

Here the two traditions diverge most dramatically and yet this very divergence illuminates the same historical relationship from opposite perspectives. The Gospel of John (1:29-30) portrays the Baptist as subordinate: he recognizes Jesus as the pre-existent "Lamb of God" and voluntarily yields his position. The Mandaean text (Chapter 30) reverses this entirely: John is the authority who *rebukes* Jesus for distorting the authentic teaching and the proper practice of Jordan baptism.

此處兩種傳統最爲劇烈地分歧，然而正是這種分歧從相反的角度照亮了同一歷史關係。約翰福音（1:29-30）將施洗者描繪爲從屬者：他認出耶穌爲先存的「上帝的羔羊」並自願讓位。曼達教文本（第30章）則完全逆轉了這一點：約翰是責備耶穌扭曲真正教導和約旦洗禮正確實踐的權威。

The very existence of this polemic confirms several historical realities: both communities acknowledge an encounter between John and Jesus at the Jordan; both acknowledge John's priority in the baptismal ministry; both acknowledge a *relationship* between the two figures. As James F. McGrath has observed: "If Mandaeism emerged out of John's followers who never found Jesus persuasive, then from their perspective the question would be why Christians elevate Jesus over John. They view Jesus as John's disciple who departed from his teachings."

這一論辯的存在本身確認了幾個歷史事實：兩個社群都承認約翰與耶穌在約旦河的相遇；兩者都承認約翰在洗禮事工中的優先性；兩者都承認兩位人物之間的關係。正如詹姆斯·麥格拉斯（James F. McGrath）所指出：「如果曼達教起源於從未被耶穌說服的約翰追隨者，那麼從他們的視角來看，問題是爲何基督徒將耶穌抬高於約翰之上。他們視耶穌爲背離了約翰教導的門徒。」

Section 8: John's Divine Commission from Above / 約翰來自天上的神聖委任

A. New Testament: John 1:6-8 / 新約：約翰福音 1:6-8

Koine Greek:

Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης· οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ. οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.

Transliteration:

Egeneto anthrōpos apostalmenos para theou, onoma autō Iōannēs; houtos ēlthen eis martyrian, hina martyresē peri tou phōtos, hina pantes pisteusōsin di' autou. ouk ēn ekeinos to phōs, all' hina martyresē peri tou phōtos.

Translation:

"There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a testimony, that he might testify concerning the Light, that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but came that he might testify concerning the Light."

「有一個人，是從上帝那裡差來的，名叫約翰。這人來，爲要作見證，就是爲光作見證，叫眾人因他可以信。他不是那光，乃是要爲光作見證。」

B. Mandaean Scripture: Drāšā d-Yaḥyā, Chapter 18 (Birth Narrative) / 曼達教經典：《約翰之書》第 18 章（誕生敘事）

Classical Mandaic (transliteration):

Šitil d-min 'ilaiia nšib, šitil d-min 'ilaiia nšib u-b-Yardna ištatal. Nhūrā 'nat b-šumā d-abā.

(Drawing from the opening of Chapter 18 and the declaration in Chapter 19)

Chapter 19 formula:

Yahia dariš b-liluia, Yuhana b-ramšia d-lilia. Nhūra 'nat b-šuma d-aba.

Translation:

"A child was transplanted from on high, a child was transplanted from on high and planted in the Jordan. I shine in the name of my Father."

"John teaches in the nights, John in the evenings of the night. I shine in the name of my Father."

「一個孩子從高天被移植而來，一個孩子從高天被移植，栽種在約旦河中。我以父之名而發光。」

「約翰在夜間教導，約翰在夜晚的黃昏中教導。我以父之名而發光。」

Exegesis / 釋經

Both traditions affirm that John was divinely commissioned — "sent from God" (ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ) in the Greek, and "transplanted from on high" (*min 'ilaiia nšib*) in the Mandaic. The metaphor differs (the NT uses the language of prophetic sending, the Mandaean text uses the language of heavenly horticultural transplantation), but the theological claim is identical: John's origin is celestial, not merely terrestrial.

兩種傳統都肯定約翰是受神聖委任的——希臘語中為「從上帝那裡差來」（ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ），曼達語中為「從高天被移植」（*min 'ilaiia nšib*）。隱喻有所不同（新約使用先知性差遣的語言，曼達教文本使用天上園藝移植的語言），但神學主張是相同的：約翰的起源是天上的，而非僅僅是地上的。

Crucially, the New Testament text (John 1:7-8) insists that John "was not the Light" (οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς) but came to testify *about* the Light. The Mandaean tradition rejects this subordination: in Chapter 19, John himself declares "I shine in the name of my Father" (*Nhūrā 'nat b-šumā d-abā*) — he is a bearer of Light, not merely a witness to someone else's light. The word *nhūrā* (light) in Mandaic and φῶς (*phōs*) in Greek occupy the same semantic and theological space: both refer to the divine luminosity that penetrates the world of darkness.

至關重要的是，新約文本（約翰福音 1:7-8）堅持約翰「不是那光」（οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς），而是來為光作見證。曼達教傳統拒絕這種從屬關係：在第 19 章中，約翰自己宣告「我以父之名而發光」（*Nhūrā*

'nat b-šumā d-abā) ——他是光的承載者，而非僅僅是他人之光的見證者。曼達語中的 *nhūrā* (光) 與希臘語中的 *φῶς* (*phōs*) 佔據相同的語義和神學空間：兩者都指涉穿透黑暗世界的神聖光輝。

Section 9: Invocatory Formula — "In the Name of..." / 祈禱格式——「以……之名」

A. New Testament: Matthew 28:19 / 新約：馬太福音 28:19

Koine Greek:

βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.

Transliteration:

baptizontes autous eis to onoma tou patros kai tou huiou kai tou hagiou pneumatos.

Translation:

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

「奉父、子、聖靈的名給他們施洗。」

B. Mandaean Formula / 曼達教格式

Classical Mandaic (transliteration):

Bšumā d-Hiia Rbia ("In the name of the Great Life")

Full liturgical expansion:

Bšumā d-Hiia Rbia, manda d-Hayyī 'zal uškan.

Translation:

"In the name of the Great Life; Manda d-Hayyi (Knowledge of Life) went forth and dwelt [among us]."

「以偉大生命之名；生命的知識（曼達·德海伊）出而居[於我們中間]。」

Exegesis / 釋經

The invocatory formula "in the name of" is shared across both traditions as the essential verbal accompaniment to baptism. The Greek *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα* (*eis to onoma*) and the Mandaic *bšumā d-* (ܒܫܘܡܐ ܕ-) are structurally identical: a preposition ("into/in") + "the name" + genitive specifying the divine being. This formula may well represent one of the oldest and most authentic traces of John's original baptismal practice, preserved in both streams of tradition.

祈禱公式「以……之名」在兩種傳統中共享，作為洗禮不可或缺的口頭伴隨語。希臘語 εἰς τὸ ὄνομα (*eis to onoma*) 和曼達語 *bšumā d-* 在結構上完全相同：介詞（「進入/在」）+「名」+屬格指定神聖存有。這個公式很可能代表了約翰原始洗禮實踐中最古老、最真實的痕跡之一，保存在兩種傳統的支流中。

IV. SUMMARY OF SHARED TEACHINGS AND PRACTICES / 共同教導與實踐總結

The foregoing exegesis reveals the following shared elements between the New Testament and Mandaean scripture regarding John the Baptist:

前述釋經揭示了新約與曼達教經典關於施洗者約翰的以下共同元素：

1. Baptism in flowing water (the Jordan). Both insist on *living* water as the medium of divine purification, rejecting stagnant water. (Greek: ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ; Mandaic: *b-Yardnā*.)

1. 在流水（約旦河）中施洗。兩者都堅持以活水作為神聖潔淨的媒介，拒絕靜止水。（希臘語：ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ；曼達語：*b-Yardnā*。）

2. Baptism as moral purification. Both link baptism with repentance and the casting away of sins. (Greek: εἰς μετάνοιαν / ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἀμαρτίας; Mandaic: *ḥaṭaiia maṭṭilu*.)

2. 洗禮作為道德潔淨。兩者都將洗禮與悔改和去除罪孽相聯結。（希臘語：εἰς μετάνοιαν / ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἀμαρτίας；曼達語：*ḥaṭaiia maṭṭilu*。）

3. John as divinely sent/transplanted from above. Both affirm his celestial origin and commissioning. (Greek: ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ; Mandaic: *min 'ilaiia nṣib*.)

3. 約翰作為從天上神聖差遣/移植的存有。兩者都肯定他的天上起源和委任。（希臘語：ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ；曼達語：*min 'ilaiia nṣib*。）

4. John as prophetic proclaimer/teacher. Both portray him as a herald calling people to transformation. (Greek: κηρύσσων; Mandaic: *dariš / kruzaiia*.)

4. 約翰作為先知性的宣講者/教師。兩者都將他描繪為呼召人們轉變的先鋒。（希臘語：κηρύσσων；曼達語：*dariš / kruzaiia*。）

5. The invocatory formula "In the name of." Both baptismal traditions employ a theophoric formula at the moment of immersion. (Greek: εἰς τὸ ὄνομα; Mandaic: *bšumā d-*.)

5. 祈禱公式「以……之名」。兩種洗禮傳統都在浸禮時刻使用含神名的公式。（希臘語：εἰς τὸ ὄνομα；曼達語：*bšumā d-*。）

6. The right-hand gesture of truth/fellowship. Both preserve a ritual handclasp using the right hand as a covenantal confirmation. (Greek: δεξιὰς κοινωνίας; Mandaic: *kuṣṭā*.)

6. 真理/團契的右手姿態。兩者都保存了以右手握手作為盟約確認的儀式。（希臘語：δεξιὰς κοινωνίας；曼達語：*kuṣṭā*。）

7. White garments in baptismal context. Both traditions associate baptismal purification with the donning of white robes. (Greek: στολαὶ λευκαί; Mandaic: *rastā*.)

7. 洗禮情境中的白色衣袍。兩種傳統都將洗禮潔淨與穿戴白袍相聯結。（希臘語：στολαὶ λευκαί；曼達語：rastā。）

8. **Light as the central theological symbol.** Both use "light" as the preeminent metaphor for the divine reality to which John points or which he embodies. (Greek: φῶς; Mandaic: *nhūrā*.)

8. 光作為核心神學象徵。兩者都使用「光」作為約翰所指向或所體現之神聖實在的首要隱喻。（希臘語：φῶς；曼達語：nhūrā。）

V. CONCLUSION / 結論

This comparative study demonstrates that John the Baptist, as witnessed in both the New Testament and the scriptures of Mandaeanism, is remembered through a remarkably consistent set of practices, symbols, and theological affirmations — even where the two traditions diverge polemically regarding his relationship to Jesus of Nazareth. The convergences are too specific, too structural, and too deeply embedded in the ritual vocabulary of both communities to be dismissed as coincidence or late literary borrowing. They point instead to a common historical memory — a shared inheritance from the baptizing communities of first-century Palestine/Mesopotamia — that was subsequently developed in radically different theological directions.

本比較研究證明：施洗者約翰——如新約聖經和曼達教經典中所見證的——是透過一套驚人一致的實踐、象徵和神學肯定而被記念的——即使兩種傳統在他與拿撒勒人耶穌的關係上存在論辯性的分歧。這些匯合之處太具體、太具結構性，且太深地嵌入兩個社群的儀式語彙中，不能被輕視為巧合或晚期的文學借用。它們指向的是一段共同的歷史記憶——來自一世紀巴勒斯坦/美索不達米亞施洗群體的共同遺產——此後在截然不同的神學方向上各自發展。

The Mandaean tradition preserves what its community claims is the original, undiluted form of John's teaching and practice — baptism in living water, ethical purity, the right-hand handclasp of truth, the white garment, nocturnal teaching sessions, and the invocation of the divine name over flowing waters. The New Testament preserves many of the same elements but reinterprets them within a Christological framework that subordinates John to Jesus. Both textual traditions, read together and with attention to their original languages — Koine Greek, Syriac, and Classical Mandaic — offer us a richer, more textured, and more historically grounded portrait of this extraordinary prophetic figure than either tradition can provide alone.

曼達教傳統保存了其社群所聲稱的約翰教導和實踐的原始、未稀釋形式——活水洗禮、倫理潔淨、真理的右手握合、白色衣袍、夜間教學聚會、以及在流水之上呼喚神聖之名。新約保存了許多相同的元素，但在基督論框架內重新詮釋它們，使約翰從屬於耶穌。兩種文本傳統，若一同閱讀並關注其原始語言——古希臘語、敘利亞語和古典曼達語——為我們提供了一幅比任何一種傳統單獨所能提供的更豐富、更有質感、更具歷史根基的這位非凡先知人物的肖像。

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Composed May 2026. All Mandaic transliterations follow the conventions of Häberl & McGrath (2020). New Testament Greek follows the Nestle-Aland 28th edition. Peshitta Syriac text follows the British and Foreign Bible Society edition as analyzed by Dukhrana Biblical Research.

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